

# ADVISORY COMMISSION ON COASTAL WATERS

## TOWN OF DARIEN

JOHN McDONALD, CHAIRMAN  
C. LINCOLN JEWETT, VICE CHAIRMAN  
WALTER RALEIGH, SHELLFISH  
FRANK KEMP, CLERK  
WILLIAM CAVERS  
FLIP HUFFARD  
ROBERT MONRO  
JON SCHOUEL  
J. PALMER SPARKMAN  
MICHAEL WALLACE



EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS  
JANE BRANIGAN, PARK & REC COMM.  
TOM BELL, HARBOR MASTER  
CAPT. GARY PAVIA, POLICE DEPT.

Green's Ledge Light

### Minutes of the October 5, 2011 Meeting

Present: Chairman McDonald, Vice Chairman Jewett, Commissioners Cavers, Huffard, Munro, Raleigh and Wallace, and Harbor Master Bell

Absent: Commissioners Kemp, Schoudele and Sparkman

The minutes of June 1, 2011 were approved with two attendance corrections: Commissioner Wallace was present (he was mistakenly marked as absent) and "Harbor Commissioner" Bell's proper title should be changed to Harbor Master (Note – these changes have been made in the copy of the Minutes submitted to the Town Clerk).

#### Chairman's Report

Chairman McDonald noted that he presented the 2010-11 annual report of the Darien Advisory Commission on Coastal Waters to the Darien Board of Selectman. A copy of the report was handed out to the Commission, and is attached to these Minutes.

The 2012 commission meeting schedule has been set and a copy of the schedule was handed out to those present, and is attached to these Minutes. All meetings will begin at 7:30pm and will be held in Room 213 of Darien's Town Hall. Meetings are scheduled for the first Monday of every month, except for the months of January, July and August. The dates are: February 1, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, September 5, October 3, November 7, and December 5.

Chairman McDonald reviewed the meetings that the Commission has participated in to date: Board of Selectman annual report presentation (June 6), FEMA meeting concerning new flood maps for Darien (June 7), Long Island Sound Study's Citizens Advisory Committee concerning new \$5.9 MM budget and Sound Vision (June 9 and September 8), CT Boating Advisory Council (September 21), Boat/Camp/2011 sponsored by the Darien Sail & Power Squadron in conjunction with the marine units of the Darien Police Department and Noroton Fire Department (July 29) and Long Island Sound Study's Citizens Action Committee policy conference (October 7).

Chairman McDonald also reviewed upcoming meetings which would benefit one or more Commissioners to attend: SoundWaters' luncheon on sustainable energy (October 26), LISS CAC Soundvision Action Plan (October 28), CT Harbor Management Association's annual dinner (November 3) and general meetings of the CT Boating Advisory Council (November 9) and Citizens Action Committee of Long Island Sound Study (December 8).

A brochure describing the Long Island Sound Study's Sound Vision Action Plan was distributed to the Commissioners.

### **Harbor Master Report**

Harbor Master Bell summed up the year's switch to an on-line mooring registration system. He noted that there were 360 on-line applications that resulted in over 300 moorings in five harbors, and 35 or 36 applicants on a wait list. Harbor Master Bell noted that space is running out in the main harbor. There has been an increase in moorings due to the Darien Boat Club's new launch and the closure of Brewer's in Stamford. Every mooring buoy in the harbor has had a registration decal with number affixed, and the mooring's associated latitude/longitude coordinates and boat registration numbers noted thanks to the efforts of local Darien Boy Scouts. Harbor Master Bell plans to check the consistency of the information during the off-season.

Harbor Master Bell has ordered violation notice stickers for the upcoming season. These will be affixed to boats in the harbor that fail to comply with mooring rules which now include proof of insurance and regular inspection and replacement of ground tackle. Harbor Master Bell noted that approximately 80-85% of boaters in the harbor complied with the Proof of Insurance requirement this first year of requirement.

There was some discussion of the effects of Hurricane Irene. Harbor Master Bell noted that about 30 kayaks broke free of the Darien Boat Club kayak racks and that "Frogs Legs" or a local Norwalk-manufactured substitute device failed for some boats at the club's docks. One sailboat broke free and was beached. A look at its mooring tackle revealed a badly corroded chain. A discussion ensued regarding the cause of such failures and how to avoid similar incidents in the future.

### **Shellfish Report**

Commissioner Raleigh said the town had signed a swap for a 25-acre subsurface parcel between Pratt Island and East Rocks/Smith Reef with Pramer, a local Norwalk oyster company. The company will now be allowed to cultivate and harvest oysters in the parcel in return for stocking Darien's recreational clam beds. In August, Pramer stocked the Great Island recreational bed with 60 bushels of oysters. The beds thrived until Irene brought increased run-off and poor water quality. Shellfish beds from Westport to Darien have now been closed for weeks, although offshore beds are still open and being worked. Contentment Island is the next bed to be stocked.

### **Mooring Specifications**

The Commissioners discussed the latest mooring specification's draft. Several items were the subject of inquiry and discussion: (i) the "Chafe Straps" description (the correctness of specifying reinforced PVC instead of water permeable wraps); (ii) the "Bridal Materials" description (the correct terminology for poly/nylon braid for all-chain moorings); and (iii) the specification of one (of two) 25% longer bridle for storms. On these matters, it was resolved that Jeff Eng of Noroton Yacht Club should be consulted. Corrections were also made to the 1200 pound DorMor specification; replacing it with 2000 pound specification, as shown on the company website.

It was resolved that these matters should be clarified and corrected and that another draft should be produced for the Commissioners to review at the November meeting. Flip Huffard volunteered to work on this project.

A discussion also ensued on whether or not there should be a bow-stern specification made for up-river moorings. It was resolved to get a copy of the specifications used in Five Mile River in Rowayton to see if such specification should serve as a template for Darien.

### **Dredging Project**

Commissioners Kemp and McDonald took another informal depth survey of Darien Harbor, repeating what they had undertaken one year ago on October 13, 2010. Essentially no change was found in the soundings (+/- 6 inches). Darien's channels are now at 5 ½ - 6 ½ below MLW. These are 1 ½ - 2 ½ feet above the depth to which Darien's harbor was last dredged, to 8 feet below MLW twelve years ago. The town has allocated \$5300 for a professional survey of the bottom. Chairman McDonald asked the Commission to consider when the professional survey should be undertaken to be considered.

### **Other Business**

No other new business was brought to the attention of the Commission.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM. The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

William Cavers, Acting Clerk

**Attachments:**

- 2010-2011 Annual Report to Selectmen, Darien Advisory Commission on Coastal Waters
- Schedule of 2012 meetings

## **Darien Advisory Commission on Coastal Waters** **2010 – 2011 Annual Report**

The Advisory Commission on Coastal Waters has had six formal meetings this year. In addition, met with the Board of Selectmen and we attended more than 10 other meetings outside of Darien with the CT/DEP Boating Division, the EPA/New York/Connecticut Long Island Study, the Norwalk Shellfish Commission, and others. We are Darien's advisory commission on Darien's most valuable natural resource, our coastal waters. Our coastal waters include seven harbors, about 300 moorings, over 1,000 boats of all kinds, 16 miles of coastline, and natural, recreational, and open shellfish beds.

Our commission is currently composed of 10 members, with one vacancy. All of our members are experienced sailors and boaters with an avid interest in boating issues, particularly those on Long Island Sound and Darien. We have no budget and, in the past, funding for projects has come from specific requests from us to the Town and to private donors.

Our major projects this year involved:

1. Flare/Up Day successfully held Saturday, May 14, 2011 on Weed Beach. This was co-hosted with the Darien Sail & Power Squadron. Over 125 boaters and their families attended this event to boost boating safety by firing safety flares and dousing fires.
2. An analysis and recommendations to revise our harbor mooring specifications.
3. A survey of the Darien Harbor channel depths, 10 years after we last dredged this.
4. Revision of the shellfish deeds off Noroton Bay based on work done by us and others including the CT Bureau of Aquaculture.
5. Continuing work on Darien water quality, especially in Scotts Cove with our Director of Health and the CT Bureau of Aquaculture.
6. Constructive work with our new Harbor Master, Tom Bell, on mooring issues and his new initiatives to computerize our mooring fields.

To summarize the outside influences on our coastal waters,

The CT legislature had been considering new bills to derive money from boaters. Their bill swept all boating license fees into the CT general fund, eliminating the \$17,000 that Darien annually received (along with other CT coastal towns) since 1978 from this. A state bill that would have set a new property tax on boats, which we opposed, was not passed.

The CT/DEP Boating Division mounted a major campaign this summer against invasive species that come in on the bottom of trailered boats; a concern mostly inland at lakes and rivers. They also have a number of new regulations proposed; some will affect us; and they are the originators of our State's safe boating certification program. We have been active in this group on these issues as an officer on the CT DEP Boating Advisory Council.

The Citizens Advisory Committee of the Long Island Sound Study received \$6.5 million this year for Long Island Sound environmental projects to improve the health of the Sound. Darien has a seat on this group. They published "Sound Health" which described these programs and they are working on a "Sound Vision" action agenda to:

- protect clean water to achieve a healthy Sound
- create safe and thriving places for all Sound creatures
- build Long Island Sound communities that work
- invest in an economically vibrant Long Island Sound

These groups, and others, have impressively improved water quality in the Sound through better sewage treatment and controlled runoff from contaminated roads and lawns. They cover complex subjects, which are of interest to us and give us a base of knowledge about coastal issues from which we can advise Darien on the protection of our most valuable natural resource, our coastal waters.

Sandy McDonald, Chairman

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### 2012 Meeting Schedule

7:30PM, Darien Town Hall, Room 213

Wednesday, February 1

Room 213

Wednesday, June 6

Room 213

Wednesday, March 7

Room 213

Wednesday, September 5

Room 213

Wednesday, April 4

Room 213

Wednesday, October 3

Room 213

Wednesday, May 2

Room 213

Wednesday, November 7

Room 213

Wednesday, December 5

Room 213